

The Master Plan & Intersegmental Transfer

Consistent with the intent of the 1960 Master Plan, **Intersegmental Transfer** allows students to begin a program of study at one of the 112 California community colleges and then to transfer their academic credit to a public (or private) college or university. In order to complete the transfer process successfully, students begin meeting general education requirements and preparation for the major, attain a GPA established by the university, and meet application deadlines.

Community college students also transfer credit between community colleges, accessing different associate degree options or job training available programs on a regional basis. Community colleges also provide courses to meet the needs of holders of baccalaureate degrees for whom changing circumstances in the working world mean that they need additional training and education.

While the transfer function of California's public colleges is often misunderstood faculty have been working for the half-century since the adoption of the 1960 Master Plan to promote transfer both within and between the segments.

Preparation of students in the economically crucial science and technology fields is especially challenging because the structure of these programs—as dictated by the profession and working world—requires students who *intend* and *are prepared* to pursue these programs from very early in their college careers.

What's working?

Articulation refers to the process of comparing the content of courses that are transferred between colleges or universities. Professionals in all three segments have worked actively for many years to promote student transfer. The "**California Intersegmental Articulation Council** (CIAC)... serves as a statewide forum for Articulation Officers to meet, discuss, and resolve college transfer and articulation issues; and to facilitate the progress of students between and among the segments of postsecondary education in California" (CIAC website < <http://ciac.csusb.edu/ciac/>>).

IGETC: Among ICAS's greatest achievements is the creation of "IGETC," the "**intersegmental general education transfer curriculum**." IGETC allows community college students to complete CSU and UC general education requirements by choosing from a wide range of courses commonly available on community college campuses. Students who complete IGETC are eligible to transfer to any CSU or UC campus with their lower division general education requirements completed. Thus it is *not difficult* for a transfer-bound student to fulfill general education requirements on community college campuses. The CSU GE Breadth pattern provides the same benefit to students who transfer to a CSU campus. **C-ID:** The California legislature has had a longstanding interest in requiring "common course numbering" of the states 145 public colleges and Universities in California. Incorporating and building on previous initiatives (the California Articulation Number system (**CAN**), the Intersegmental Major Preparation Articulated Curriculum Project (**IMPAC**), and

the Lower Division Transfer Patterns Project (**LDTP**), the **Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID)** is a numbering system being developed to ease the transfer and articulation burdens in California's higher educational institutions—and to do so in a much less expensive and labor intensive fashion that would be required to renumber courses at 145 public institutions.

ASSIST is an online student-transfer information system that **shows how course credits earned at one public California college or university can be applied when transferred to another**. ASSIST is the official repository of articulation for California's public colleges and universities and provides the most accurate and up-to-date information about student transfer in California.

Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) programs allow eligible students to study at a California community college and have a guarantee of admission to a UC campus from the time they start at the community college. Community college students receive course-planning assistance from a UC Transfer Counselor. When students complete the provisions of their TAG contract, the campus guarantees admission to UC. The Transfer Admission Guarantee is available for most majors.

What remains to be done?

While past articulation and transfer initiatives have focused on coordinating *general education* requirements, recent discussions (especially under IMPAC and LDTP) have begun to focus on clarifying expectations about **major preparation**.

While **ASSIST** is an invaluable tool, it is in need of modernization for which funding is not presently available.

Technology makes it possible to provide much more information to students than ever before, though technology comes at a cost. Both local and statewide **degree audit** systems would help students identify the most efficient path toward the certificate or degree they seek.

What can legislators do to help?

Capacity – The biggest problem for students who are transfer ready is lack of space at universities in general as well as lack of space in specific majors. The Legislature can assist by prioritizing funding for higher education and supporting strategic plans for UC and CSU to recover and expand capacity.

Technology Initiatives – Funding targeted technology initiatives that help students identify the most efficient path to a degree and to identify those courses which would allow “almost finished” degrees to be completed would be very valuable in each segment and to the state as a whole.

Visit ICAS – the Academic Senates of the three segments of higher education have the ability to solve real transfer problems. If legislators have concerns about transfer, please meet with ICAS to establish dialogue as to how we can most effectively work together to solve these problems. <http://icas-ca.org> 3/3/2010

The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) was established by faculty in 1980 as a voluntary organization consisting of representatives of the Academic Senates of the three segments of public higher education in California. For more information, see: <http://icas-ca.org/>

Facilitating Community College Transfer: A Master Plan Mandate

Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates April 2009

INTRODUCTION

The 1960 *California Master Plan for Higher Education* established the principles of universal access and choice, employing the differentiation of admissions pools for the California Community Colleges (CCCs), the California State University system (CSU), and the University of California system (UC). The transfer function is an essential component of California's commitment to access. In order to ensure baccalaureate-earning opportunities, the UC and CSU are to establish a lower division to upper division ratio of 40:60 to provide transfer opportunities to the upper division for community college students, and eligible CCC transfer students are to be given priority in the admissions process. Since the late 1980s, the Legislature has focused on accomplishing a "seamless" transfer system, but because of the necessary diversity between and, especially, within the higher education segments, **transfer is a complex process to bring into coherence – one that defies simple or low-cost solutions.**

Some factors that make transfer complex:

- The CCCs serve a diverse body of over 2.5 million students.
- Two-thirds of all CSU students and one-third of all UC students begin their careers in a CCC.
- Each of those students' preparations and ambitions has to be coordinated and aligned to transfer opportunities via services offered at 110 different CCC colleges.
- The system of transfer opportunities is vast and differentiated: 23 unique CSU campuses and 9 distinct UC undergraduate campuses with multiple and specialized major programs across the campuses.

The population of students who enter the community colleges reflects the diversity of California. While some students are college-ready, many students who have the potential to eventually succeed at a university enter community colleges underprepared for college, and they require additional coursework and support services before beginning transfer-level courses. Also, many students do not enter community college with transfer as a clear and expressed goal. Some students who underperformed in high school may underestimate their true capabilities. Others may come from an environment in which college graduation is not viewed as an expectation or even as a realistic possibility. For others, developing the competencies necessary to complete high school may not be achieved nor may the educational opportunities available foster the development of even the most basic skills. Hence, shortcomings of the education system prior to entering higher education are an on-going challenge to postsecondary educational success, not merely transfer.

FUNCTIONS ESSENTIAL TO TRANSFER

The 2005 ICAS authored "A Transfer Discussion Document" and identified **the following functions as essential to transfer:**

Function 1: **Provide students with access to current information** about major preparation, prerequisites, transfer requirements at UC and CSU, and course requirements.

Function 2: **Provide counselors, advisors, transfer center directors, and others with current information** about existing and new articulation agreements and major preparation.

Function 3: **Provide a venue for faculty from across the segments and disciplines to discuss curricular and transfer-related issues.**

Function 4: **Provide Articulation Officers with access to new information** about changes in major requirements so they might support new articulation agreements and faculty's creation of new or revised curricula.

Function 5: **Provide a mechanism for ongoing certification of courses meeting the common general education curriculum** (IGETC/CSU GE Breadth, and SciGETC).

Function 6: **Provide a mechanism for assigning course identification numbers and verifying that courses actually qualify for the assigned number.**

Function 7: **Provide for statewide dissemination of curricular recommendations and decisions** (e.g., agreement on course identifier descriptions, findings of discussion groups regarding major preparation, essential changes in course content).

Function 8: **Provide students with assurances that the courses they take will transfer to a four-year university.**

Function 9: **Provide transfer students with UC/CSU advising linked to confirmed acceptance of units from their community colleges**, their declaration of a major and development of their personal graduation plans.

Function 10: **Provide a process whereby all transfer initiatives are reviewed by the faculty who are ultimately responsible for effectuating them.**

These functions remain essential and are currently being addressed to a varying degrees. To the extent that transfer works well in California, it could be accomplished more effectively and more efficiently if the aforementioned functions were adequately funded.

Coordinated and supported intersegmental efforts are essential to the transfer function. It is only through the segments continually working together to solve the dynamic problems that naturally occur that transfer can be made the seamless process that is desired to the benefit of both our students and our institutions.

EARLY INTERVENTION

To facilitate transfer, information and guidance should be available for students, especially low-income, first generation college students to understand that transfer is possible, and the financial cost should not deter them. Thus, even prior to transfer, secondary and postsecondary systems, and communities at large, must collaborate to establish college-going attitudes and experiences; as students plan to enter college, they must be made aware of the many resources available to them—including transfer planning and counseling, financial aid assistance and workshops, and academic advisement. We acknowledge the many successful initiatives—including CSU's EAP, GEAR-UP projects of K-12, concurrent enrollment opportunities, the CCC's icanaffordcollege.com media blitz and School to College articulation initiative--to inform potential students, parents, and the public at large that transfer and graduation are realistic goals. An important context to acknowledge is that the transfer process is complex, affected by educational opportunity and academic preparation, attitudes towards college attendance, socioeconomic status, personal and family demands that may lengthen the time needed for completion of educational goals, mobility (or lack thereof), and more.

NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER

A successful program of student transfer requires informed student behaviors, college and university planning and programs, and considerable faculty and staff efforts to identify and publicize information about appropriate academic preparation. Ideally, for a student to transfer from a California community college to a California public university, **the necessary supports must be available for:**

1. Students to:
 - a) identify transfer as a potential goal;
 - b) receive counseling and guidance for completing appropriate courses for transfer and major preparation; and
 - c) identify, apply for, and receive any available financial assistance, and
 - d) identify a potential major at relevant 4-year institutions and make those intentions clear to counselors at the time they seek academic assistance.
2. Community colleges to:
 - a) offer sufficient courses for students to complete preparation for transfer in a timely fashion;
 - b) provide opportunities for ongoing counseling and career exploration, because many students change majors and academic goals several times and may need assistance in formally declaring a major;
 - c) offer a wide range of services through transfer centers, including campus tours, college fairs, workshops, financial aid assistance, and catalog libraries; and
 - d) provide adequate on-campus professional development to ensure uniformity of information to counselors who directly assist students seeking to transfer.
3. Receiving 4-year institutions to:
 - a) provide timely transfer credit evaluations, major advising and degree audits to ensure clear path to degree;
 - b) engage in student outreach using websites and orientation meetings;

- c) post information about major preparation and any course identifiers for use by students, counselors, transfer center directors, and articulation officers; and
- d) provide adequate training opportunities (e.g., Ensuring Transfer Success) for articulation officers and counselors who directly assist students seeking to transfer.

REQUIRED INTERSEGMENTAL AND INTRASEGMENTAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT TRANSFER

All of these activities must occur in a coherent way across the higher education segments, and within them, requiring on-going and multi-pronged collaborations between and within the segments.

Consequently, **there must be both the intersegmental and intrasegmental supports** for:

1. holding disciplinary faculty discussions to help develop and maintain coherent and 'navigable' lower division preparation requirements;
2. developing shared goals, objectives, and timelines for transfer programs and policies/practices that facilitate transfer;
3. codifying articulation for those courses among and between institutions;
4. assigning and posting common course identifiers to major preparation courses meeting agreed upon criteria;
5. making available accurate and coherent financial aid information that shows the impact of academic choices; and
6. making the right information available for **all** students, especially low-income, first generation college-attending students, so they can know that transfer is logistically possible and financially possible.

Extensive and on-going intersegmental training is necessary to prepare counselors, financial aid personnel, articulation officers, faculty, and others who will assist students at all points in this progression from desire to acceptance, to matriculation, and to graduation at a baccalaureate-granting institution. External groups, organizations, and mechanisms are available to help students proceed as smoothly as possible. We identify many of those groups and their responsibilities in the transfer mission below.

Of the various intersegmental transfer efforts, some are institution-specific (e.g., counseling or advising services at each institution), some are intersegmental initiatives (e.g., ASSIST, IMPAC, OSCAR); some depend upon membership of particular groups (CIAC, ICC); and some are segment-specific and rely to varying degrees upon cooperation with other segments (e.g., LDTP, UC Streamlining Course Major Articulation Preparation Process, Student Friendly Services). Still others strive to be truly intersegmental in nature, but are funded solely by one segment (e.g., C-ID). **All of these activities require ongoing state and institutional support and must be aligned cooperatively and strategically.**

THE FACTS: ELIGIBILITY REFORM IN FRESHMAN ADMISSION

The UC Board of Regents in February 2009 adopted a proposal to change freshman admission to give more high-achieving students the chance to apply to UC and receive a full review of their applications. The new rules will take effect for students applying for fall 2012 admission, meaning the class applying in November 2011 for admission the following year.

The Academic Senate proposed the changes to address concerns that current policy prevents UC from considering thousands of outstanding students. It removes unnecessary barriers like the SAT Subject Tests and sends a welcoming message to a large and more diverse pool of applicants than UC has previously drawn.

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR 2012 ADMISSION

Under the new policy, all California high school seniors who

HOW DOES THE NEW POLICY DIFFER FROM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TODAY?

Today, there is no "entitled to review" concept.

Students either meet the requirements that define UC eligibility and thereby are guaranteed a seat somewhere in the UC system, or they are deemed ineligible and only considered for admission under the university's Admission by Exception policy. Students currently become eligible for admission to the 15 UC required colleges if they (a) have a SAT score (Writing or SAT Reasoning Test) in the top 12.5 percent of all graduates statewide, and (b) either have a SAT Subject Test score index that places them in the top 12.5 percent of graduating seniors statewide, or rank in the top 4 percent of their school's graduating class.

In effect, the current eligibility requirements define who is invited to apply while simultaneously guaranteeing them admission to UC based on grades

highest-performing students that are not based on traditional measures of academic achievement.

SAT Subject Tests are no longer required for

This eliminates a barrier that has kept otherwise high-achieving students from applying to UC. However, the tests will still be required as part of the application process for students applying to certain UC campuses and departments.

Now, SAT Subject Tests are only required for applicants to particular majors

The share of students who are guaranteed admission based on their rank in their own high school class will grow (9 percent vs. the current 4 percent).

Fewer students overall will receive an admission guarantee (10 percent of high school graduates vs. 12.5 percent now), but nearly all students who would have received this guarantee under current policy will be entitled to a full review of their application by their campuses of choice under the new policy

- maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better (weighted by up to 3 semesters of honors/AP/IB bonus points) in these courses, and

take the ACT with Writing or SAT Reasoning Test

are invited to apply and will be entitled to a comprehensive review of their applications at each campus to which they apply. Within this pool of applicants, two categories of applicants will be guaranteed admission: those who are in the top 9 percent of all high school graduates statewide as determined by an admissions index, and

- those who fall in the top 9 percent of *all* high school graduates statewide as determined by an admissions index, and
- those who rank in the top 9 percent of *their own* high school graduating class.

Together, these two pools of applicants will comprise just over 10 percent of UC's admitted student pool. The remaining students (approximately 2.5 percent) will be offered admission as an outcome of the comprehensive review process, which has been in use since 2002.

THE FACTS: ELIGIBILITY REFORM IN FRESHMAN ADMISSION

WHY MAKE THESE CHANGES?

The intent is to give more high-achieving high school students the opportunity to present their qualifications to UC campuses and, at the same time, to maintain high standards for admission through comprehensive campus selection processes. The policy:

- Sends a clear message that *all* students who have completed a reasonable course of preparation for college and have done well deserve a full review of their applications – not just those students deemed eligible by a limited set of numeric indicators.
- Addresses the fact that some outstanding students with high GPAs and ACT/SAT scores currently are excluded from consideration by UC because of a minor gap in their coursework or a missing test – chiefly, the SAT Subject Tests, which are not required by any other public university in the country.
- Continues to ensure that the highest-achieving students based on traditional academic indicators receive the benefit of guaranteed admission to at least one UC campus, though not necessarily their campus of choice.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THIS NEW POLICY ON UC'S DIVERSITY?

It is difficult to say with certainty what the net effect of the policy will be on the diversity of the enrolled student body. We can safely say the applicant pool will be more diverse than it ever has been. While we have done some simulations on the potential effects on admission, the analyses have limitations: They are based on data for students who graduated in 2007 (data that will be five years out of date when the policy actually is implemented); and they are based on campus selection processes from 2007, many of which have already changed and will continue to evolve over the next two years – just as we expect applicants to adjust their preparation and behavior in response to the new policy.

At this point, this policy creates a *broader* pool of students with the *opportunity to be considered* for admission and is not about campus selection.